

EARLY VOTING

**No Reason Needed
To Vote Early**



For the first time in a Presidential general election, eligible voters in Illinois can vote at early voting centers. This pamphlet provides general information regarding new State laws that affect all eligible voters in Illinois.

WHEN CAN PEOPLE VOTE?

The general election is November 4, 2008, but eligible voters can vote at early voting centers as early as October 13.

WHAT IS EARLY VOTING?

Illinois voters may cast a ballot prior to Election Day without having to provide a reason or an excuse for wanting to vote early.

WHEN IS EARLY VOTING CONDUCTED?

Registered voters can vote early during the period established by state law. Some early voting centers will open on Monday, October 13, a state holiday (Columbus Day), and others will open on Tuesday, October 14, 2008. Check with your election authority for details. Early voting ends, at all locations, on Thursday, October 30, 2008.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE VOTE?

Election authorities across the state will announce the locations of early voting centers. In almost all cases, the early voting centers will be different from the voters' regular polling place. Early voting must be done by personal appearance.

WHO AUTHORIZED EARLY VOTING?

The Illinois General Assembly approved House Bill 1968 in 2005, and it was signed into law as Public Act 94-0645.

DO MANY PEOPLE VOTE EARLY?

The number of people voting early increases with every election. In the 2008 primary election, counting absentee voting, almost 11% of the votes were cast before Election Day.

WHY DO PEOPLE VOTE EARLY?

Many people say they simply think voting early is more convenient and others suggest they want to avoid long lines at the polling place on Election Day. No reason is required to vote at an early voting center. Approximately 35 states have some form of early voting.

IS ABSENTEE VOTING STILL ALLOWED?

Yes. Absentee voting laws remain in place. Persons who desire an absentee ballot should contact their local election authority for an application or for more information.

WHAT ARE THE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST VOTER FRAUD?

Voters casting a ballot at an early voting center must display valid identification such as a current driver's license, a state-issued ID card or another government-issued ID with a photograph.

The requirement of photo identification for an early voter is stricter than other identification requirements for people casting a ballot at their polling place on Election Day.

The votes cast at early voting centers are not counted until Election Day.

IF I VOTE EARLY, BUT CHANGE MY MIND, MAY I VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?

No. The law prohibits a person who voted at an early voting center from voting again on Election Day.

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING TO VOTE?

The normal deadline for registering to vote is October 7, the 27th day before the election.

However, Grace Period Registration is an extension of the deadline for registration. This allows for the registration of voters and for a change of address at the office of an election authority, but it requires that a person participating in Grace Period Registration to vote at that same office or by mail at the discretion of the election authority. Those people are not allowed to vote at an early voting center or at a polling place on Election Day.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO REGISTER TO VOTE?

A person must:

- Be a citizen of the United states;
- Be at least 18 years of age by Election Day;
- Have been a resident of the precinct at least 30 days prior to Election Day.

When registering to vote in person, two forms of identification are required – one must show the current address of the applicant.



THE STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

A primary goal of the State Board of Elections is to help bring about greater understanding and participation in the electoral process.

The State Board of Elections is an independent state agency charged with the responsibility of having general supervision over the administration of election laws of the State.

The State Board works closely with election authorities in all regions of the State.

Elections are administered locally by the State's 110 election authorities. These are the county clerks in 101 counties, one county election commission and eight municipal election commissions.

As part of their many responsibilities, election authorities conduct local voter registration programs, train election judges, find polling places, prepare ballots, oversee Election Day activities and supervise the vote count at the local level.

For more information on early voting or
other election laws and procedures,
contact your election authority or visit the
Board's website: www.elections.il.gov

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